

North West Sector, Horley Phase 1 - local lettings plan

This plan is agreed by Mount Green Housing Association and Reigate & Banstead local authority. This plan applies to the lettings at the development known as North West Sector (phase 1).

1.0 LOCATION AND PROPERTY TYPE

- 1.1 This local lettings plan is to govern the allocation process of the social rented properties developed by Mount Green Housing Association at the known as North West Sector (phase 1), Horley. This is a development of 99 units, comprising of 72 private sale properties, 16 shared ownership properties and 11 social rented properties.
- 1.2 The accommodation which will be owned and managed by Mount Green Housing Association as social rented accommodation and to which this local lettings plan applies, is featured in the table below

Address	Property Size
1 Kingfisher House, Webber Street	2 Bed 3 Person Flat
2 Kingfisher House, Webber Street	1 Bed 2 Person Flat
3 Kingfisher House, Webber Street	2 Bed 3 Person Flat
4 Kingfisher House, Webber Street	1 Bed 2 Person Flat
5 Kingfisher House, Webber Street	2 Bed 3 Person Flat
6 Kingfisher House, Webber Street	1 Bed 2 Person Flat
1 Tanner Crescent	3 Bed 5 Person House
3 Tanner Crescent	3 Bed 5 Person House
5 Tanner Crescent	2 Bed 4 Person House
7 Tanner Crescent	2 Bed 4 Person House
9 Tanner Crescent	2 Bed 4 Person House

2.0 BROAD AIM OF THE LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

- 2.1 The primary aim of the local lettings plan is to achieve at first letting, a balanced and sustainable community at North West Sector Phase 1. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council operate a choice based lettings scheme and allocate most social housing through this scheme. This local lettings plan applies to all nominations made to the

units through this scheme at first letting and any future re-lets, whether this is through the choice based lettings scheme or via a direct offer letting.

2.2 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council Housing Allocation scheme (November 2015) states under (9.2) that the council may apply a local lettings policy to a property or group of properties for initial lettings. The result of any local lettings plan adoption may mean that applicants in the highest band may not be considered first and preference may be given to applicants with a lower housing need and / or effective date. The policy explains that the aim of a local lettings policy is to create sustainable and balanced communities while making best use of affordable housing and that local lettings policies will be considered:

- To provide a mix of working and non-working households
- To meet a specific housing need in the borough for example applicants under occupying family accommodation
- To provide a mix of family and household sizes on a scheme to address housing management issues, for example the reduction of anti-social behaviour
- To support other Council initiatives such as regeneration areas in the borough

2.3 As a Registered Provider, Mount Green Housing Association works with several local authorities in creating and maintaining sustainable communities. One way in which sustainable communities are creating is through the adoption of a local lettings plan. Local lettings plans can be used to highlight particular needs of an area within the borough, or of a new housing scheme or redevelopment and seek to use the allocation of housing to ensure that the community will be as sustainable as possible. Mount Green Housing Association will work with many local authorities and will identify neighbourhoods, areas and schemes which would benefit from a local lettings plan and will use local lettings plans to enable new schemes to be allocated to a mixture of tenants, in order to develop sustainable communities.

2.4 100% of first lettings and 75% of subsequent re-lets to the properties at North West Sector (phase 1) Way will be offered to Reigate & Banstead Borough Council for nomination in accordance with the Nominations Agreement.

3.0 ALLOCATION CRITERIA

3.1 The following paragraphs 3.2 to 4.4 describe the selection criteria to be taken into account when determining how to nominate households to the property and whether to bypass a household under the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council housing allocation scheme and the local lettings plan criteria.

Employment criteria

3.2 In order to achieve the stated aim of the local lettings plan and to create a balanced and sustainable community, it is agreed that a proportion of tenancies let under the local lettings plan will be in stable employment.

- 3.3 For the first and subsequent re-lets of the social rented accommodation, the percentage of nominees who must be in employment (as defined below) shall not be less than 50%. The definition of employment is that at least one permanent adult member of the household is currently working at least permanent 18 hours per week, in paid employment. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council must include this requirement in property adverts or direct match to any new voids and re-let voids in accordance with this criterion. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council must also ensure they have obtained evidence of employment from all shortlisted or directly nominated households.
- 3.4 Five social rented properties are available at initial handover. For the first lets to properties at North West Sector (Phase 1), Reigate & Banstead Borough Council must advertise or direct match 50% of the properties to households who meet the employment criteria (*at least one permanent adult member of the household is currently working at least 18 hours per week, in paid employment*). For any subsequent re-lets, Mount Green Housing Association will inform Reigate & Banstead Borough Council whether a match is required with the same criteria.
- 3.5 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council must forward all matched nominee details to Mount Green Housing Association. Mount Green Housing Association will interview nominees and seek evidence of employment. Nominees, who are not able to provide the required evidence or who do not meet the employment criteria detailed in this local lettings plan, will be rejected. Mount Green Housing Association will inform Reigate & Banstead Borough Council of any such rejections and seek further nominations for households who meet the local lettings plan criteria.
- 3.6 If Reigate & Banstead Borough Council have exhausted all efforts to source eligible nominations and can provide evidence of this, the relevant manager at the Council must contact the relevant Mount Green Housing Association area manager to confirm this and provide evidence of all exercises undertaken to ensure criteria has been applied, before other nominations not meeting the criteria may be considered.

3.8 **Breaches of tenancy agreement**

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council will not forward nominee details of any applicants who do not meet the Council's policy for qualifying under the grounds of behaviour, as per section 5.9 of the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council Housing Allocation scheme (November 2015)

The Council policy states that people considered guilty of unacceptable behaviour, serious enough to have entitled the Council to a Possession Order had they been a secure tenant of the Council, will not qualify to join the register. This includes all members of the applicant's household. Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Breaches of tenancy (either in the private or social rented sector) for which there are statutory grounds for possession;

- The applicant or any member of the applicant's household has committed acts of physical violence against staff (housing provider's, landlords or other agents) or other residents;
- A conviction for using accommodation, or allowing it to be used, for immoral or illegal purposes such as drug dealing or prostitution;
- Serious damage or neglect of the property;
- Applicants convicted of housing or welfare benefits related fraud where the conviction is unspent under the Rehabilitation Offenders Act 1974.
- A serious nuisance or annoyance to neighbours;

3.9

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council will not nominate a household to Mount Green Housing Association if they are involved in any anti-social behaviour proceedings currently have or in the last 12 months. This will include but is not restricted to activity relating to anti-social behaviour, use of illicit drugs including dealing, harassment. This will also apply where a notice of seeking possession (NOSP) has been served against them (in the last 12 months). If this type of case is identified, such applicants must not be shortlisted or directly matched by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council staff. Any such cases not identified by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council at the shortlisting or direct matching stage, where subsequently information is obtained by Mount Green Housing Association at the interview stage, will be rejected by Mount Green Housing Association. Mount Green Housing Association will inform Reigate & Banstead Borough Council of any such rejections and seek further nominations.

Rent account

3.10

Some households on the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council housing register have never or do not currently have a tenancy or may not have disclosed this on their application. Where it is known that a household have a tenancy with a landlord but have significant rent arrears (more than 4 weeks rent), that are not as a result of housing benefit claims needing to be assessed, backdated claims or similar, such households must not routinely be shortlisted or direct matched by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. However, each case must be treated on its merits. There can be no blanket exclusion. Homeless households where a statutory duty has been accepted by the Council are excluded from this requirement.

4.0 PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING A VIABLE MIXED TENURE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 In order to achieve a viable mixed tenure development, other criteria and rationale can also be used to allocate properties under this plan. Mount Green Housing Association will follow their Allocation Policy for all new applicants. This will include a pre tenancy financial appraisal to help prospective tenants understand the affordability of their homes. As a new development, Mount Green Housing Association wishes tenants to be committed to their home. From time to time Reigate & Banstead Borough Council will nominate households for whom they have accepted a statutory duty under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. These households

have the right to request that the council undertake a review of the suitability of the accommodation offered, if they consider it unsuitable.

- 4.2 Where a statutory homeless household is nominated to Mount Green Housing Association and then refuses to accept the accommodation offer, Mount Green Housing Association will notify Reigate & Banstead Council immediately and will request another nomination. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council must provide a new verified nomination within 2 working days of being notified by Mount Green Housing Association of the refusal.
- 4.3 Some properties may be under-occupied against their relative potential occupancy. For example some units are 2 bedroom 4 person bed space, these may be allocated to successful households requiring 2 bedroom accommodation but are a 2 or 3 bed space household e.g. 1 adult and one child requiring separate bedrooms.

High support needs

- 4.4 The 11 social rent units are a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. A number of households on the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council register, who need this size of accommodation, may have medical problems which may result in them having a higher banding on medical grounds. The range of medical problems may be quite varied. From a housing management viewpoint and in considering the creation of sustainable communities, the number of households who have alcohol/drug abuse problems and those who have severe and enduring mental health problems with support needs, shall be limited. No more than 2 households containing any member of a household who fits this profile may be nominated to the properties at Northwest Sector (phase 1). Mount Green Housing Association will interview nominees and seek evidence of support needs. Where significant support needs are identified at interview by Mount Green Housing Association (as described above) and these were not identified by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council at the time of nomination, Mount Green Housing Association will reject the applicant and will inform Reigate & Banstead Borough Council of the reason for the rejection and seek further nominations for households who meet the local lettings plan criteria. The Council reserves the right to appeal any decision to reject an applicant where it considers that Mount Green Housing Association has insufficient evidence to support the rejection or that the support needs are not as significant as to make the nominee unsuitable. Appeals will be undertaken within 7 days of the request by the Council.

5.0 COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 Initial complaints concerning the local lettings plan will be responded to by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council or Mount Green Housing Association, as appropriate. In determining the relevant agency the content of the nomination agreement needs to be taken into account.

6.0 MONITORING PROCESS

- 6.1 In order to ensure that the local lettings plan is successful, there will be a monitoring process in place to monitor both the sustainability and balance of the community that is produced, both for new lets and re-lets
- 6.2 An estate profile will be produced by Mount Green Housing Association within 18 months of the first letting to include:
- Level of void properties at any given time
 - Analysis of frequency of any significant ASB issues
 - Analysis of housing management activity on the estate. This would include NOSPs served for breach of tenancy